31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 N06 Comanche N06
Oklahoma

another bunch went back into Texas somewhere and they all went separate there. And now these, I forgot what their name is . . . way up in southwest of California, I think. Well, they talk like us. I don't know their white man name but us Indians call them *ɜ́ɛ́ai*. That has meaning of "red Comanches." That's what their name is. Then over there in Utah there's a bunch talk like us, and they talk easy, slow, say every word like us Comanches. They call us word means something like "they come from hot country." You know, some folks tell you that Comanches come from Mexico, but it ain't true. Comanches been here and there but they come from up north somewhere. My folks, as far as they can remember, come from Colorado near Denver somewhere, but it wasn't no Denver in them days. The army run my folks and their folks in Oklahoma, but we didn't belong here way back. We from Colorado. That's where my father's father was killed by them Utes. I still know that country from what the old people told me and what I ask them.

Migrations

In the late 1600s the Comanches began to migrate southward into contact with the Spanish settlements of New Spain and east onto the Plains. The Comanches most likely moved south to be nearer a source of horses, which they first acquired raiding with the Utes in northern New Mexico. The first large group of Comanches appeared in the New Mexico area around 1705. In the succeeding ten or fifteen years, with the Utes, they were constant sources of harassment to the Spanish settlements in the area. In approximately 1726, the Comanches, perhaps feeling their new power with the acquisition of the horse, turned on their former allies, the Utes. Many of the war stories told by Sanapia and some of my older Comanche informants tell of horse-raiding expeditions against the Utes.

In the early eighteenth century the Comanches began to expand to a greater degree onto the Plains. The contraction of the pedestrian Dismal River culture in the central Plains around 1725 is attributed by some authors to the energized predatory equestrian Comanche people. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Comanches had established themselves as a real threat to the Spanish settlements in New Mexico. At first, however, the Spanish policy toward the Comanches was relatively long-suffering because the existence of the mounted and war-like Comanches acted as a protective barrier on New Spain's eastern frontiers against intrusion from that direction by large numbers of French and English. During this period, however, the Comanches made treaties with certain tribes to the north who were sympathetic to the French, and thus French traders began to supply the Comanches with firearms, a trade item which the Spanish had always feared to release to the Comanches. In the late eighteenth century the dangerous situation provoked by the Comanche's acquisition of guns stimulated the Spanish to send military forces against the Comanches, whose center at that time was in southeastern Colorado. In approximately 1790 the northern Comanche bands, perhaps responding to the military pressures imposed by the Spanish, made an alliance with the Kiowa, an alliance which was never broken.

In 1820 Major Long encountered a large camp of Comanches on the upper great bend of the Arkansas River. Prior to this time the Comanches had little